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SPIDER-MAN

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SPIDER-MAN®

REDEMPTION

SPIDER-MAN: REDEMPTION

by J.M. DEMATTEIS, MIKE ZECK, & BOB McLEOD

CHAPTER TWO:

WAR GAMES

JIM NOVAK, LETTERER * CHRISTIE SCHEELE, COLORIST
GLENN GREENBERG, ASSISTANT EDITOR * TOM BREVOORT, EDITOR
BOB HARRAS, EDITOR IN CHIEF

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OKAY, NOW--

--WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHAT HAP-PENED?

WHAT HAPPENED?

KAINE KILLED HER.

HE KILLED JANINE.

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED!!

YOU TAKE IT EASY NOW, KID. WE DON'T WANNA SHOOT--

--BUT IF WE HAVE TO--

KRAKOW

YOU IDIOTS!

YOU CAN'T DO ANY-THING TO ME!

KRAKOW

The war had just begun--and KAINE was already winning.

By bringing Janine back to me--then taking her AWAY again, he'd smashed me down, cracked me open.

YOU DON'T REALIZE WHO I AM! WHAT I'M CAPABLE OF!

TOWW

AND NEITHER DOES HE!

In my rage and grief, I had no hope left. No reason to go on living. All I had...

...WAS MY HATE!

HE KILLED THE WOMAN I LOVE--

--AND I'M GOING TO KILL HIM, DO YOU HEAR ME?

I'M GOING TO KILL HIM!

NO.

There was more to BEN REILLY--to PETER PARKER--than that. To surrender to my hate would make me no better than him.

And I refused to let Kaine drag me down to his level. I refused to become what he was.

And in that moment of calm and clarity...

...I pushed through the veil of my emotions...

...and saw the truth.

It wasn't Janine at all. Just some kind of... CONSTRUCT.

Sophisticated enough to fool me in the darkness, in the confusion of battle...

KRAAASHH

...but as much a mannequin as the others sprawled across that storage room floor. As much a mannequin...

MEET ME IN THE WOMB

THIS THING AIN'T REAL. IT AIN'T EVEN ALIVE.

WOULD SOMEBODY MIND TELLIN' ME--

MEET ONE IN THE WORLD

--WHAT THE HELL IS GOIN' ON HERE?

...AS Kaine HIMSELF.

I LOOKED INTO THE FACE OF THE TRUTH...

...AND SHUDDERED.

FOR ALL THE YEARS, FOR ALL THE STRUGGLES TO MAKE A LIFE FOR MYSELF, TO BE A MAN --I WAS JUST A REFLECTION IN A GLASS. A MIRROR IMAGE OF BEN REILLY.

A DISTORTED IMAGE, AT THAT.

I WAS REILLY'S CLONE... A FAILED CLONE... SLOWLY DETERIORATING. CELLS EXPLODING, FLESH MELTING, EVERY SECOND OF EVERY HOUR OF EVERY DAY.

NO MAN COULD EVER COMPREHEND THE PAIN I LIVED WITH... THE EXTRAORDINARY SUFFERING MY CELLULAR DETERIORATION CAUSED ME. NO MAN COULD COMPREHEND IT...

BUT ONE MAN WOULD.

SGASHH

REILLY.

FOR A MOMENT, I TRULY *SAW* HIM THERE IN THE GLASS. FOR A MOMENT I FELT, NOT LOATHING-- BUT *TENDERNESS.*

WASN'T HE MY BROTHER, AFTER ALL: AS MUCH A REFLECTION OF *ME* AS I WAS OF *HIM*?

WE WERE *SIAMESE TWINS*, REILLY AND I: JOINED AT THE SOUL.

WOULDN'T WE BOTH BE BETTER SERVED BY A *COMING TOGETHER* --NOT A *RENDING APART?*

WE'D *HAVE* OUR UNION, I DECIDED --A FINAL, *EN-DURING* UNION. WE'D HAVE IT *SOON.*

BUT NOT BEFORE WE DANCED ONE LAST DANCE. NOT BEFORE REILLY UNDERSTOOD, TO THE BOTTOM OF *HIS* CELLS, WHAT IT MEANT TO BE KAINE.

I SLIPPED ON THE SUIT-- THE ONE DESIGNED TO SLOW MY PHYSICAL DEGENERATION -- AND STRODE THROUGH THE HAUNTED TOMB THAT WAS *PROFESSOR WARREN'S* LABORATORY.

IT WAS THERE THAT MY FATHER BIRTHED ME, LIKE FRANKENSTEIN BIRTHING THE MONSTER. IT WAS THERE THAT HE REJECTED ME. SHAMED AND HUMILIATED ME.

SKRAKKK

AND IT WAS THERE...

...THAT I WOULD DIE.

BUT NOT *ALONE.*

KLIK

NOT ALONE.

HELLO, JANINE.

I WAS AFRAID. I WON'T LIE AND SAY I WASN'T.

BUT I LEARNED, WHEN I WAS STILL A LITTLE GIRL, THAT IT'S HOW WE *FACE* OUR FEAR THAT MATTERS.

DON'T WORRY. HAVE I *EVER* HURT YOU-- IN ALL THE YEARS WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER?

I TOLD YOU BEFORE--YOU'RE JUST THE *BAIT*. YOU'RE JUST--

YOU REMIND ME SO MUCH OF HER, DO YOU KNOW THAT?

SO MUCH.

KAINE WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM THE MONSTER I GREW UP WITH. THE FATHER WHOSE ABUSE NEARLY DESTROYED ME.

BUT IT *DIDN'T* DESTROY ME.

I LEARNED TO FACE MY FEAR, TO FACE *HIM*. AND THAT NIGHT WHEN I PULLED THE TRIGGER, WHEN I *KILLED* HIM...

WHY DO YOU PULL AWAY? *WHY*? AM I *THAT* REPULSIVE? THAT *DISGUSTING*?

ANSWER ME, WITCH --BEFORE I--

FORGIVE ME, JANINE. I CAN'T BLAME YOU. *REALLY* I CAN'T.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WOMAN ON THIS EARTH WHO EVER LOVED ME--

--AND THE PRICE SHE PAID FOR THAT LOVE--

--WAS TERRIBLE *INDEED*.

...I KNEW THAT NO *OTHER* MONSTER-- NO OTHER *MAN*...

...WOULD EVER HURT ME AGAIN.

The message was clear enough.

"Meet me in the womb": The lab where the Jackal CLONED Peter Parker--cloned ME!--and created first Kaine and then...the OTHER one.

The lab where Warren tore my life apart, shredded my identity...turned Parker into Reilly--and sent me into exile for five long years.

FIVE YEARS, my thoughts bellowed, I THOUGHT I WAS THE FRAUD, I WAS THE CLONE! FIVE YEARS I--

For the second time that night I struggled against a wave of rage, a floodtide of emotion. I had to CONCENTRATE. keep sharp. keep in CONTROL.

Janine needed me...

...AND I WASN'T GOING TO LET HER DOWN.

WELCOME... BROTHER.

WHERE IS SHE?

SAFE--

--FOR NOW.

YOU'VE GOT WHAT YOU WANT, KAINE. YOU'VE GOT ME.

NOW LET HER GO.

I DON'T THINK SO.

I pushed the hate down--never expecting that COMPASSION would rise up to replace it. I tried to push THAT away, too...

MY BIRTHPLACE, BEN--WHERE I WAS HATCHED FROM YOUR CELLS.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT I ENDURED HERE--AT WARREN'S HANDS? IT WAS AN AGONIZING BIRTH--IN SO MANY WAYS.

AT FIRST, I WAS THE FAVORITE SON. THE WALKING MIRACLE. AT FIRST, MY DEAR FATHER PUT ME ON A PEDESTAL.

THEN, WHEN HE REALIZED THAT I WAS FLAWED... THAT I WAS SLOWLY DETERIORATING...

--HE TORE ME DOWN. TRIED TO DESTROY ME.

MY OWN FATHER!

...but found, to my astonishment...

...that I COULDN'T.

KAINE--I UNDERSTAND.

WHATEVER HE IS, I thought, HE DIDN'T ASK TO BE.

Warren MADE HIM. WARREN twisted HIM. HE'S THE ONE WHO'S RESPONSIBLE.

AND IN A STRANGE WAY...

...SO AM I.

YOU

UNDERSTAND

NOTHING!

SWAKKK

BUT I'M GOING TO TRY AND MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND.

I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU ABOUT ME, BEN. ABOUT MY PAIN.

I PRAY, FOR YOUR SAKE--

--THAT YOU'RE A FAST LEARNER.

CHAKK

WHY WAS I DOING IT?

TORTURING THE ONE MAN IN ALL THE WORLD WHO CARED ABOUT ME?

SPAKKK

WAS IT BECAUSE I LOATHED HIS WEAKNESS...

...HIS BLEEDING HEART?

SKOMM

OR WAS IT BECAUSE...

...I FELT UNWORTHY OF HIM?

WHATEVER THE CASE, I TOOK NO SMALL JOY IN WATCHING HIM FINALLY... SNAP.

BEN, THE DECENT. BEN, THE GOOD.

BEN, THE RAGING ANIMAL.

BUT I KNEW MY BROTHER WELL. TOO WELL.

IN A MOMENT HE'D REALIZE THAT HE'D LOST CONTROL. IN A MOMENT, HE'D STRUGGLE TO CONTAIN HIS RAGE. TO UNDERSTAND ME.

PERHAPS EVEN-- FORGIVE ME.

I NEARLY LAUGHED. DON'T YOU REALIZE, I WANTED TO SAY...

...THAT THERE'S NO FORGIVE-NESS, NO REDEMPTION...

TOOM!

TOOM!

SSSSSS

AHAHA!

HUHHHHHH

YUHH!

KRAKK

TOOM!

TOOM!

FOR A MAN LIKE ME?

"Just a little formula, Ben--of my own devising. I'm quite LIKE you in that way: a student of science."

Kaine's voice seemed to echo down into my consciousness, as if I were underwater.

"Just a little formula--to do to YOUR cells what was done to MINE."

Then the NEEDLE pierced my flesh. I felt a wave of unbearable heat--like lava, rushing under my skin.

"To give you the SMALLEST TASTE of what I live with--"

My muscles were DISSOLVING. My NERVE-ENDINGS were on fire. A thousand hot daggers STABBED through my brain.

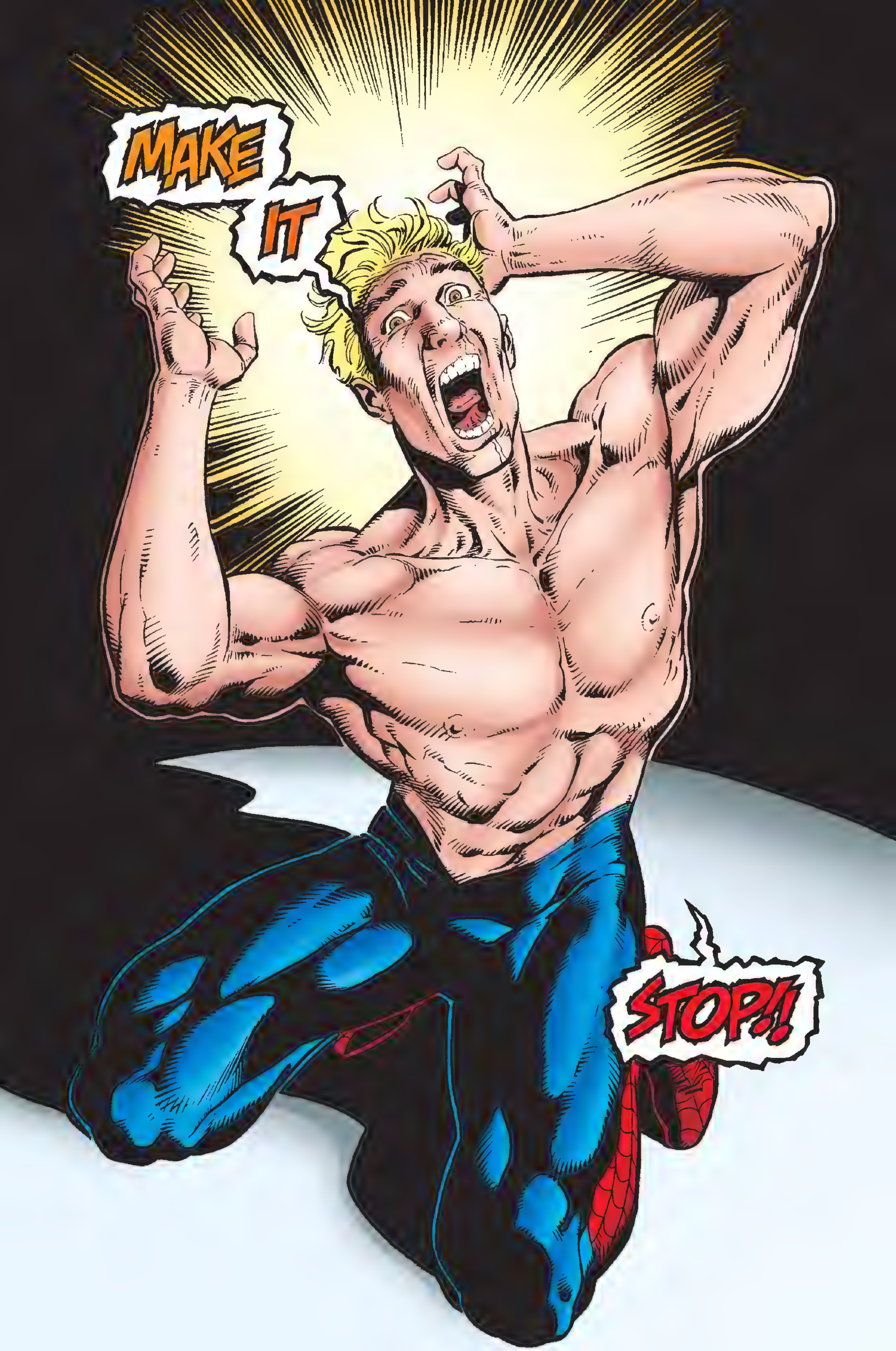
I couldn't move, I couldn't think, I could hardly BREATHE. Everything I knew, everything I was--was PAIN.

I remember screaming (to no one, to EVERYONE. To Kaine, God, and the devil) three words, over and over:

"--every second of every hour--"

"--OF EVERY DAY."

"Make it stop. MAKE IT STOP. MAKE IT STOP."


MAKE
IT
STOP!!

WH-WHERE-- WHERE ARE WE? WHERE'S JANINE?

WE'RE OUT IN THE WORLD, BEN, IN THE SWEET, CLEANSING RAIN. AS FOR JANINE--

SHE'S UN-IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW.

YOU SEE, WE'VE TAKEN A LITTLE JOURNEY, YOU AND I--

--INTO THE PAST.

AH...YOU RECOGNIZE IT, THEN--EVEN IN YOUR CURRENT STATE?

BUT HOW COULD YOU *NOT* RECOGNIZE THE PLACE YOU GREW UP IN? WHERE BEN AND MAY PARKER *RAISED* YOU?

A-A-AUNT... *MAY*?

WHERE OUR... MUTUAL FRIENDS *PETER* AND *MARY JANE* ARE CURRENTLY LIVING.

BUT THEY'RE NOT HOME RIGHT NOW.

WHICH MEANS THAT TONIGHT--

KRAAASHHH

--THE HOUSE BELONGS TO US!

I WAS BORN INTO SHAME AND SUFFERING --WHILE *YOU* HAD A LIFE. A FAMILY. *LOVE.*

WHERE'S THE FAIRNESS IN THAT, BEN? CAN YOU *TELL* ME?

THE ODD THING IS-- IN SOME SMALL PART OF ME-- I COULD *FEEL* WHAT YOU FELT. LIKE A DISTANT ECHO.

AND SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS OF MY SOUL, I LOVED THE PEOPLE *YOU* LOVED. LOVED THIS PRECIOUS *PLACE.*

BUT THOSE FEELINGS... SO VAGUE, *SO UNFATHOMABLE...* DIDN'T *NURTURE* ME AS THEY DID *YOU*--

MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

THEY TORE ME APART!

WARREN... THE JACKAL... TOOK ALL THIS AWAY FROM YOU. TURNED IT TO DUST IN YOUR HANDS.

YOU HAVE SUFFERED, HAVEN'T YOU?

BUT YOU HAVEN'T QUITE SUFFERED ENOUGH.

IT BROKE MY HEART TO LEAVE.

...TO MY REDEMPTION.

THE ONLY REDEMPTION EITHER OF YOU WILL FIND...

OF ALL THE PLACES ON EARTH, I THOUGHT, MAYBE HERE...I CAN FIND THE KEY...

THEN A VOICE ROSE UP FROM THE DEEPS OF MY SOUL. ANGRY, OUTRAGED: REDEMPTION? THE VOICE HISSED. ARE YOU AS NAIVE AS REILLY?

...IS DEATH.

I KNEW THAT VOICE WELL. IT WAS THE VOICE OF TRUTH.

IT WAS MY FATHER'S VOICE.

I felt like I had the worst hangover in the history of the world...

...but, otherwise, I was fine. The burning inside... the endless, unendurable pain... was OVER.

My arm was swollen from some kind of recent injection.

An ANTIDOTE, I realized, to the poison he'd shot me up with.

But, WHY?

Kaine could have left me to die a long and horrible death...

...yet there I was, back in my apartment, alone.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT--!

NO...

...not QUITE alone.

JANINE!

The REAL one this time. NO mistaking her in the light of day.

She was a little GROGGY. a little DAZED...

BEN...?

...but she was ALL RIGHT.

IT'S ME, JANINE.

I'M HERE.

And I swore, in that moment...

I'M HERE.

...that we'd never be apart AGAIN.

I HELD HIM... HELD MY SWEET BEN... FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.

LATER I TOLD HIM ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH KAINE. HOW THE LAST THING I REMEMBERED WAS HIM COMING AT ME WITH A NEEDLE--

--AND THEN I BLACKED OUT. NEXT THING I KNEW... HERE I WAS.

WHY D'YOU THINK HE *DID* IT, BEN? BROUGHT US BACK HERE? GAVE YOU THE ANTIDOTE?

HE'S TOYING WITH US, JANINE. IT'S ALL A... SICK *GAME* TO HIM.

BUT IT'S *HIS* GAME--AND WE DON'T HAVE TO *PLAY* IT.

LET'S GET *OUT* OF HERE... THE TWO OF US. LET'S LEAVE KAINE AND NEW YORK AND ALL THIS MADNESS *BEHIND* US.

WE CAN START OVER AGAIN. JUST LIKE *LAST* TIME.

I FELT HIM TENSE UP. SAW THE SHADOW MOVE ACROSS HIS FACE.

"LAST TIME," HE SAID, WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.

"LAST TIME YOU ABANDONED ME. FAKED YOUR OWN DEATH.

"SHATTERED MY WORLD.

"WHY, JANINE?"

"WHY?"

AND THEN A *NEW* SHADOW MOVED OVER HIM. HE CROUCHED THERE LIKE AN INSECT. EVERY MUSCLE IN HIS BODY TENSED.

MY *SPIDER-SENSE--!*

IT'S *KAINE!* IT *HAS* TO BE!

I'M GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE-- NOW!

HE'S NOT TAKING YOU AWAY FROM ME AGAIN! NO ONE'S GOING TO SEPARATE US--

--EVER AGAIN!

I WAS NEVER BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER. I DON'T HAVE SOME UNCANNY SIXTH SENSE THAT WARNS ME OF DANGER...

...BUT SOMEHOW I KNEW, AS WE RACED DOWN THE STAIRS, THAT BEN WAS WRONG. IT WASN'T KAINE OUT THERE WAITING FOR US. IT WAS SOMETHING WORSE. AND FAR MORE INEVITABLE.

AND I KNEW, TOO, THAT WE *WERE* GOING TO BE APART... *TORN* AWAY FROM EACH OTHER...

...FOREVER.

HANDS IN THE AIR!

NOW!

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

BUT HE KNEW...WE *BOTH* KNEW...

...EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS.

ELIZABETH TYNE...AKA JANINE GODBE...AKA SARAH PORTER...AKA--

WELL, I THINK YOU KNOW THE REST.

YOU'RE UNDER *ARREST*, MISS TYNE. FOR THE MURDER OF YOUR FATHER.

TIME TO STOP RUNNING, ELIZABETH. IT'S *OVER.*

IT'S JUST *BEGUN!!*

A PART OF ME *WANTED* HIM TO TAKE THOSE POLICEMEN APART--THEN SWEEP ME UP INTO HIS ARMS AND CARRY ME AWAY.

BUT I COULDN'T LET HIM DO THAT.

TO *EITHER* OF US.

BEN, STOP... *PLEASE!*

PLEASE!

LISTEN TO THE LADY, MR. REILLY!

WE'LL HEAR WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT TO SAY... DOWN AT THE STATION.

BE A GOOD BOY, REILLY--AND I'LL FORGET YOUR LITTLE *TANTRUM.*

BUT *SHE'S* NOT THE CRIMINAL! IT WAS HER *FATHER!* HE--

HE'D SUFFERED *SO MUCH*, OUR POOR BEN HAD. BUT AS I'D SAID EARLIER...

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...HE HADN'T QUITE SUFFERED ENOUGH.

NEXT: CHAINS